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From the Office of the Director of Health

Pit Bull Ordinance Protecting Citizens

Springfield residents are safer one year after City Council adopted an ordinance requiring all pit bull dogs within city limits to be registered, spayed or neutered, microchipped and confined or restrained.

"We believe the ordinance is performing as intended with a significant reduction in the number of pit bulls in the community and a corresponding reduction in the number of vicious dog complaints," says director of health Kevin Gipson. "Although we can't accurately determine the number of unregistered pit bulls still in the community, we are certain the population has significantly decreased."

Since the adoption of the ordinance, nearly 350 pit bull dogs have been registered. More than 60 tickets have been issued for violations of the ordinance, and 153 pit bull dogs and pit bull mixes have been impounded. Owners have claimed 33 of those dogs, 112 have been euthanized and eight remain at the Animal Shelter.

The number of pit bulls being impounded has been reduced from 502 in 2005, or 22% of all dogs impounded, to 362 in 2006, or 17% of all dogs impounded.

Vicious dog complaints have also been reduced by 33%. In the 12 months preceding the passage of the pit bull ordinance, 15 vicious dog complaints were filed in municipal court. Eleven of those cases involved pit bull dogs or pit bull mixes. In the 12 months since the adoption of the ordinance, ten vicious dog complaints have been filed at municipal court, but only four of those involved pit bull dogs or pit bull mixes.

"As we continue to decrease the population of unregistered pit bulls in Springfield, enforcement will become less demanding and crowding at the Animal Shelter should also be reduced," adds Gipson. "The health department has received numerous calls from citizens grateful for the removal or secure confinement of their neighbor's pit bull dogs, and very few complaints. We believe our city's streets are now safer due to the adoption and enforcement of the pit bull ordinance."

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